

# **The Bible for Grown-Ups3**

## **“The Old Testament”**

\*Let's quickly recap the last two weeks:

-While most know some Bible stories, most people don't know the story of the Bible.

-Understanding how we got the Bible is almost as important as knowing what's in it.

-If you don't know the story of the Bible, it's easy to discount the stories in the Bible.

-The way we got our Bibles is not the way we got The Bible.

-We're talking in this series about how we got the Bible.

-The story of the Bible begins when Jesus' tomb was found empty. After he was seen alive, the church launched. The events surrounding Jesus' life were then documented.

-Documents documenting the life of Jesus were Matthew, Mark, Luke, John

-The Apostle Paul and others evangelized gentile cities.

-When gentiles became enamored with a particular Jew, they became enamored with the sacred texts of the Jews.

**\*So continuing the story of the Bible:**

-Jewish texts predicted the coming of the Messiah, Jesus. Gentile Christians embraced these texts as Scripture, not as Jewish Scripture, but rather as Christian Scripture.

-While gentile church leaders were enamored with Jewish Scripture, they were not enamored with Jewish religion. Their interest in the Jewish text was not historical or cultural, but **Christological**.

-They weren't looking for the story of the Jews in the Jewish texts. They were looking for Jesus. They rejected Jewish interpretation of their

own Scripture because they had missed their on Messiah.

-The Old Testament chronicles God's redemptive, sequential activity in history. In Genesis, God begins as Creator, then assumes the role of founder.

## **God the Founder**

-God founds a nation to bring redemption to the world.

-He began with a man with no children, called **Abraham**. Through Abraham, he birthed a nation with an international, multi-generational purpose. It was a nation that would be enslaved by a superpower(Egypt) to whom he sent his servant, **Moses**.

-Yahweh spoke in the only terms an ancient pharaoh could understand—those of power and violence. He freed his people and established a **covenant**.

## **Sinai Covenant**

-If you've ever read through the Old Testament and thought God was a bit angry and barbaric, here's what you missed.

-It contains approximately 19 sexual prohibitions. All

of these behaviors were practiced in Egypt and Canaan.]

-Today, in all developed nations in the world, 17 of the 19 behaviors prohibited in Leviticus are illegal or frowned upon.

-The Hebrews were way ahead of their time.

Example:

***Leviticus 18:6 NAS***

*'None of you shall approach any blood relative of his to uncover nakedness; I am the LORD.*

-This seems very reasonable. When Jesus showed up 1,500 years later, the Egyptian monarchy was still marrying their siblings.

**The Sinai Covenant:** *A moral and civil code that when understood in its ancient context was brilliant!*

-It may strike us as unsophisticated or barbaric. It was superior in every way to civil and religious law of the surrounding nations.

-The protections afforded to the most vulnerable were nothing short of revolutionary.

Note: Women, servants, foreigners, and children all fared better under Hebrew law than did their

counterparts in the surrounding nations. Why? The Hebrews believed men and women were made in the image of God, and everyone was born with inherent dignity. They didn't worship creation. They believed they were the pinnacle of creation. Then, against God's better wishes, the nation got herself a king—several in fact.

\*Here's a simple outline so far:

God the Creator

God the Founder

Abraham

Moses

Sinai Covenant

**Kings**

-All the cool kids had kings. Most were disasters; such was the nature of kings. They raised taxes, formed armies, and had multiple wives. With her third king, Israel got herself a temple as well.

**Temple**

-Their temple was without the one thing all great temples had—an image. There was no

image of God for whom it was built. Their god vault was without a god.]

-When kings misbehaved, God would send prophets to warn and correct.

## **Prophets**

-Occasionally prophets would speak beyond their historical context to a future day when God would do something through nation for all nations.

-A fascinating illustration of this is found in Isaiah. He wrote 600 years before the time of Jesus. He foresaw a mysterious suffering servant whose suffering would benefit the nation and the world.

### ***Isaiah 53:3, 5-6, 8-9, 11 NAS***

*3 He was despised and forsaken of men,  
A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; And like  
one from whom men hide their face He was despised,  
and we did not esteem Him.*

*5 But He was pierced through for our transgressions,  
He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for*

*our well-being fell upon Him, And  
by His scourging we are healed.*

*6 All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us  
has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused  
the iniquity of us all to fall on Him.*

*8 By oppression and judgment He was taken away;  
And as for His generation, who considered that He  
was cut off out of the land of the living For  
the transgression of my people, to whom the stroke  
was due?*

*9 His grave was assigned with wicked men, Yet He  
was with a rich man in His death, Because He  
had done no violence, nor was there any deceit in  
His mouth.*

*11 As a result of the anguish of His soul, He  
will see it and be satisfied; By  
His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant,  
will justify the many, As He will bear their iniquities.*

-Over and over, Israel was reminded they were a  
divine means to an end. The story  
of the ancient Hebrews is magnificent.

-God wades into the fray and plays by the rules of the

kingdoms of this world in order to usher in a kingdom not of this world.

- To sand off the rough edges of God's Old Testament behavior is to miss the mess God waded into in order to see the story of redemption played out to the bitter and bloody, "Crucify him, crucify him!" end.]
- Our Old Testament is a saga of an ancient people struggling to survive in a world where food was scarce, enemies were real, and death was just a minor infection away.
- In spite of that, they clung to Yahweh, and he in turn clung to his nation, careful not to override their freedom with his presence.
- It's a gritty and powerful ancient history with a divine purpose. The purpose was announced by God to Abraham and fulfilled 2,200 years later when a Jewish carpenter discovered his fiancée was pregnant.
- The apostle Paul said it best in his letter to Christians in Galatia:

***Galatians 4:4-5 NAS***

*4 But when the fullness of  
the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of  
a woman, born under the Law,  
5 so that He might redeem those who were under  
the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.*

## **Conclusion**

-The storyline of the Old Testament should cause all of us to drop to our knees in gratitude. There's no need to tidy it up. It's the story of God preparing the world for a Savior.]

-By the second century, the church had incorporated the Hebrew Bible into Christian worship. They gave it a new name...The Old Covenant.

-Later it became known as the Old Testament.

-It was called "old" because Christians believed the covenant God established with Israel had been replaced with a new covenant for everyone.

-Still, there was no Bible—just Hebrew texts, various accounts of Jesus' life, and some correspondence between a famous church planter and his gentile congregations.

**Don't miss next week and the conclusion of The Bible for Grown-Ups!**